

February 14, 2011

The Honorable Scott Reichner
Chair, House Education Committee
Montana House of Representatives

Re: Opposition to HB 456, Define scope/boundaries of human sexuality/reproductive in K-12 public schools
Sponsor: Representative Cary Smith

Mr. Chair, Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today. My name is Mary Ann Dunwell and I'm here in opposition to House Bill 456, an act to define the scope of human sexuality and reproductive education in K-12 public schools. I live in Helena, am a parent of a sophomore in public high school, a taxpayer and voter.

Over the summer and fall, I testified in favor of the Helena School District's new health enhancement curriculum because I believe all school students have the right to be educated with research based human sexuality information for disease prevention, health and wellness. Students have a right to education that gives them comprehensive knowledge to make informed, healthy choices when they encounter difficult decisions. They have a right to live beyond "La La Land" and to possess the tools they need to become responsible adults.


I feel HB 456 is unnecessary. The Helena School District already accommodates requests for parental notification, materials review and excused absence following board passage of its Comprehensive Health Enhancement Curriculum.

In addition, this proposed legislation is preemptive for the rest of the state because, sadly, no other district has as comprehensive a health education curriculum as the Helena School District, so it's not even relevant, it doesn't exist.

Also, statewide legislation like HB 456 supercedes local school district jurisdiction.

Finally, the last part of the bill, I feel is blatant censorship. To prohibit provision of instructional materials by professionals who represent an agency that happens to provide abortion services is discriminatory and censors the free flow of educational information.

For the benefit of students throughout Montana, I request that you vote against HB 456.
Thank you for your consideration of my testimony.

Sincerely,

Mary Ann Dunwell
Parent, voter, taxpayer
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